

Timeline of New Jersey Colony History

1500s



Lenni-Lenape live in what is now New Jersey.



1609



Henry Hudson explores the region of New Jersey.



1777



The Continental army wins the Battle of Princeton.



1787

New Jersey approves the U.S. Constitution.





The Native Americans

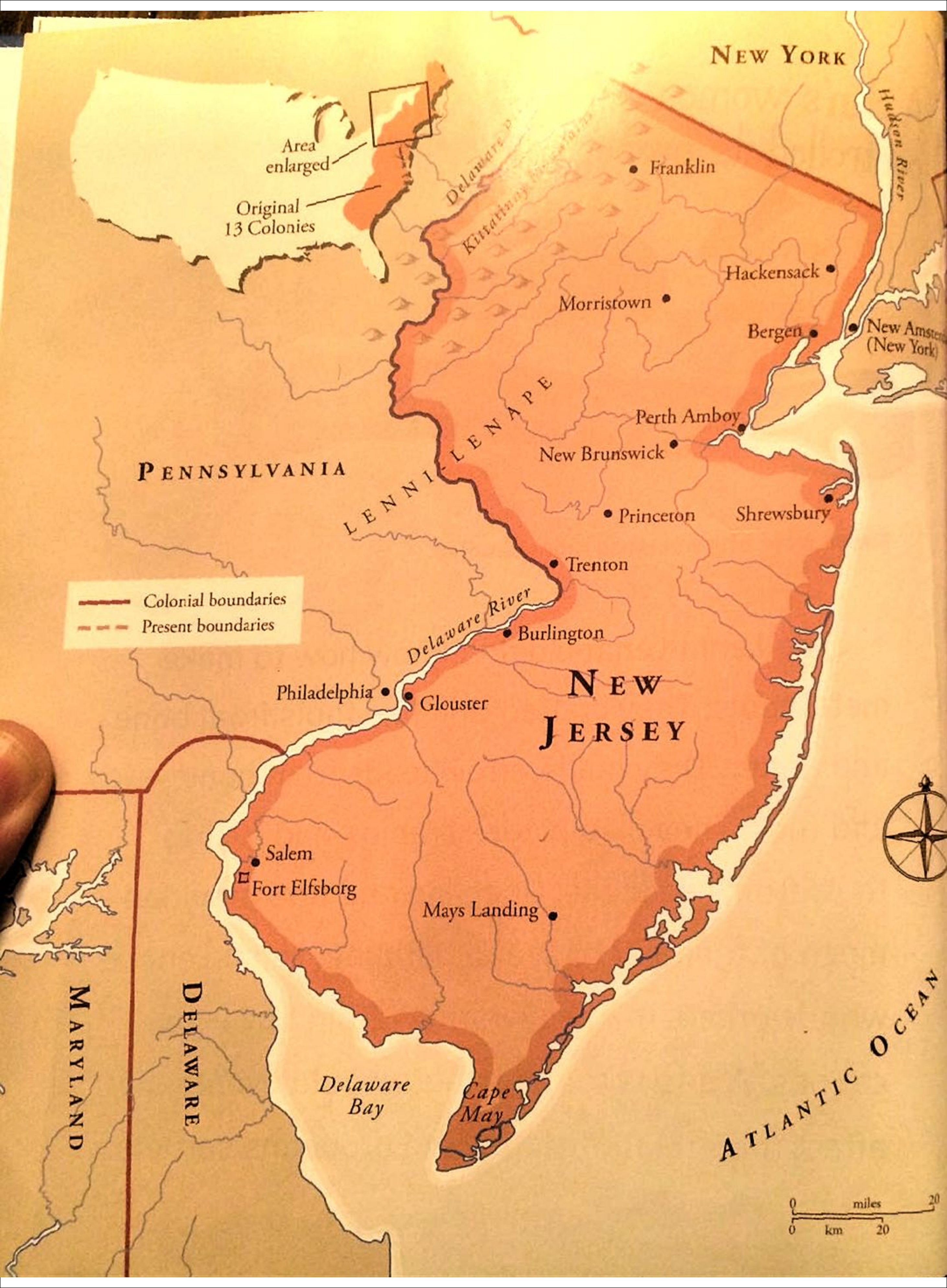
The region that we now call New Jersey was home to the Lenni-Lenape people in the 1500s. These Native Americans lived in clans of related families. Their villages included domed wigwams and longhouses shaped like loaves of bread. They constructed both kinds of buildings by placing mats of tree bark, grass, and animal skins over a wooden frame. A hole in the ceiling allowed smoke from their cooking fires to escape.

The Lenni-Lenape Die

Lenni-Lenape depended on crops such as maize (corn), beans, and squash. Women planted and farmed the clan's fields. They also kept gardens and gathered wild foods such as berries and onions. Men hunted deer and other game with bows and short spears. Many Lenni-Lenape moved to the seashore during summers. Men netted and speared fish and turtles. Women collected other seafood such as clams and oysters.

Food such as corn could be stored for later use.





A New Colony

The Lenni-Lenape first encountered Europeans when Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano landed in the region in 1524. Permanent contact began in 1609 when Henry Hudson claimed a huge part of the Lenni-Lenape lands for the Netherlands. A Dutch company called the Dutch West India Company built trading posts along the Delaware River in the 1620s. The Lenni-Lenape provided Dutch traders with beaver furs. The furs were made into expensive hats and coats in Europe.



The fur trade was an important part of the relationship between the natives and the early European settlers.

The Dutch traded items such as metal pots, cloth, and guns to the Native Americans in return. The Dutch West India Company soon created a colony called New Netherland to take advantage of the fur trade. But fur traders usually made their money and returned to Europe. The company wanted people to settle in New Netherland for good. Only a few took the offer, even when it included free land.

Taxes, Trouble, and Trade

The company sent Willem Kieft to lead New Netherland in 1639. Kieft risked harming the fur trade by ordering the Lenni-Lenape to pay taxes. They refused. The two sides began to fight. A Lenni-Lenape man took revenge on a colonist. Kieft then led a bloody attack that killed dozens of villagers. A war followed. Hundreds of people in the Hudson River area died. The war almost destroyed New Netherland.

Kieft's leadership resulted in a violent feud with the Lenni-Lenape.

After being fired for his poor leadership, Kieft died on the way back to the Netherlands.



New company governor Peter Stuyvesant rebuilt the colony. But new problems arose by 1651. The fur trade had attracted people from many European countries. They competed with one another for furs. A small Swedish colony called New Sweden claimed land around the Delaware River in 1638. Dutch soldiers took control of New Sweden. They hoped to keep it from competing in the fur trade with New Netherland.

Many Swedish settlers began arriving in the 1630s.



Part of New
Netherland
later became
New York state.



Slave Labor

Farming played
a growing role in
New Netherland.
But the colony had
problems convincing
settlers to cross
the Atlantic Ocean
to work the farms.



Slavery quickly became an important part of the colonial economy.

New Netherland began to use enslaved Africans
as workers. Large farms had the most slaves. But
some small farm owners also used slave labor.
About one-tenth of New Netherlands population
was made up of enslaved people by the 1660s.



George Carteret helped to develop New Jersey into an English colony.

Carteret also helped to found the Carolina colonies.

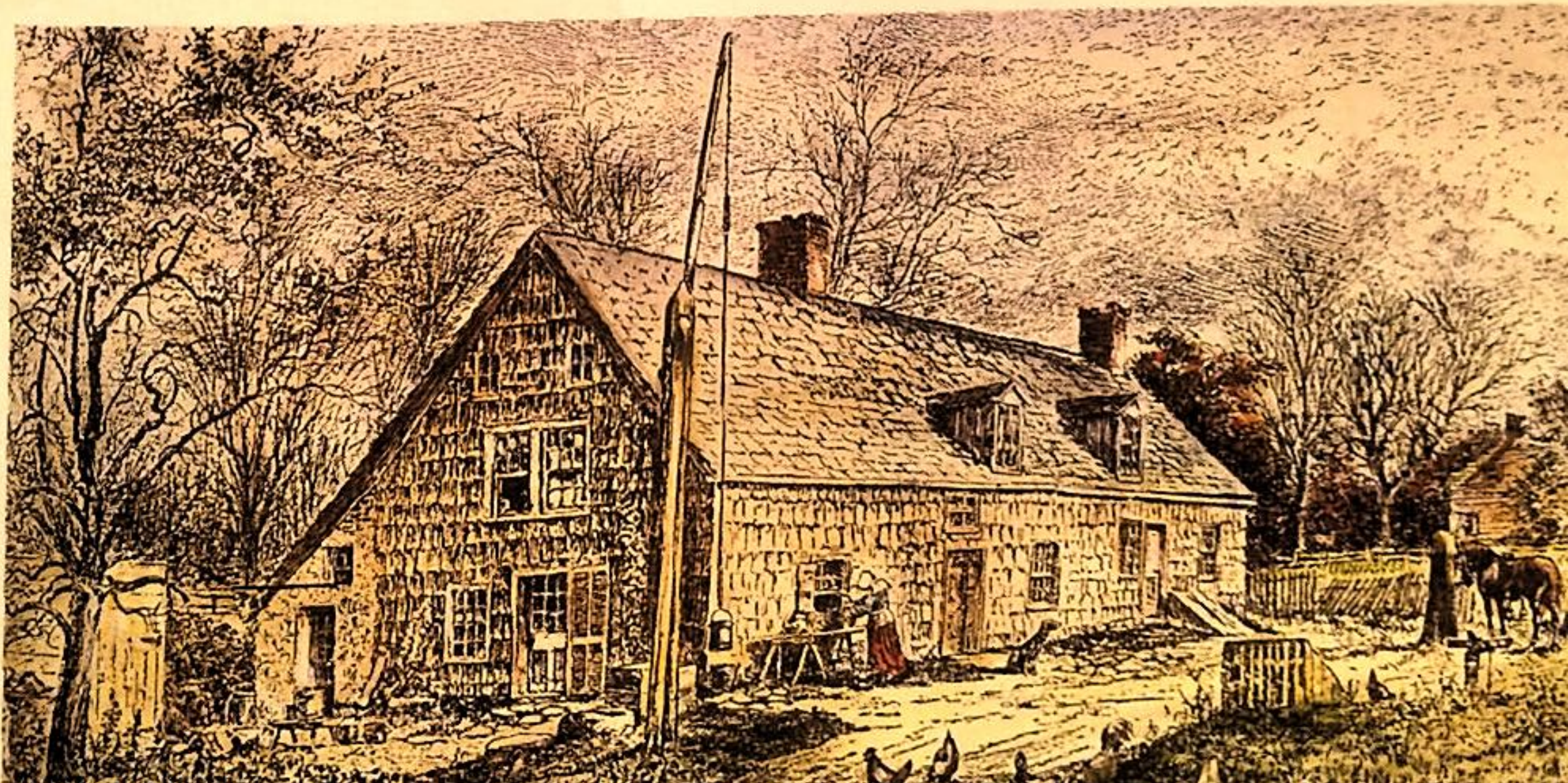
A Change in Leadership

The Dutch faced pressure from a powerful competitor. England had colonies up and down the Atlantic Coast. English warships and soldiers took New Amsterdam without a fight in 1664. New Netherland became New York. King Charles II of England gave Dutch lands south of the Hudson River to George Carteret and John Berkeley.

Carteret named the area New Jersey, after the area where he lived in England.

Carteret and Berkeley attracted new settlers by promising religious freedom to all New Jersey colonists. Religious groups such as the **Quakers** and Puritans flocked to northern New Jersey to start farms. The Lenni-Lenape began to suffer from diseases the Europeans had brought with them. The numbers of Lenni-Lenape were reduced from thousands to hundreds. Many sold their land to settlers. Others moved west to Ohio and Pennsylvania.

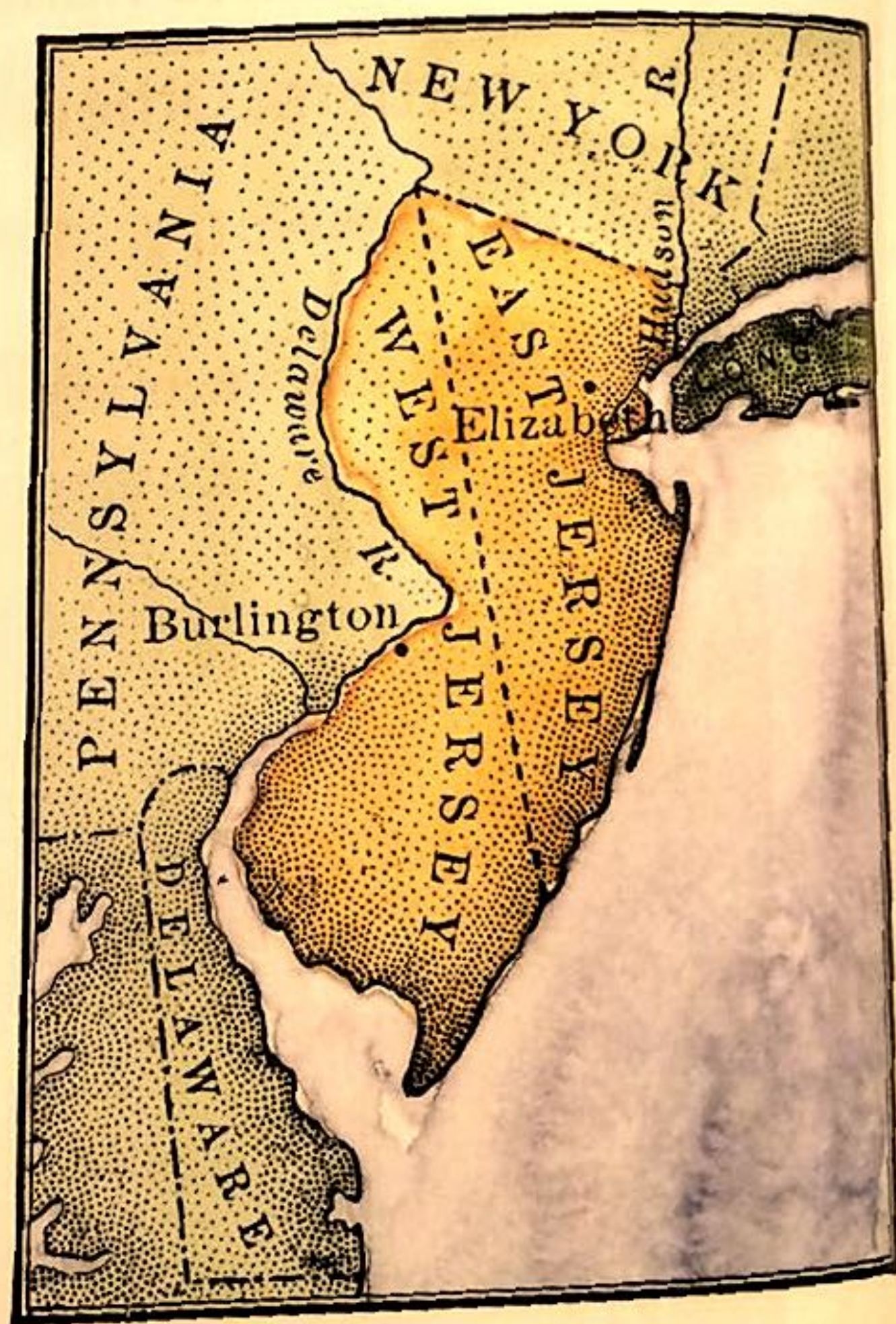
Quaker and Puritan farms began to appear throughout the colony.



New Freedoms

Berkeley sold his part of New Jersey to Quakers. The colony split between Quaker West Jersey and Carteret's East Jersey in 1676. The Quakers wrote a **constitution** guaranteeing its settlers many rights. It included the right to vote for local government officials. The two Jerseys rejoined in 1702 when the English government took control of New Jersey away from the private owners. About 10,000 people lived in New Jersey by the next year.

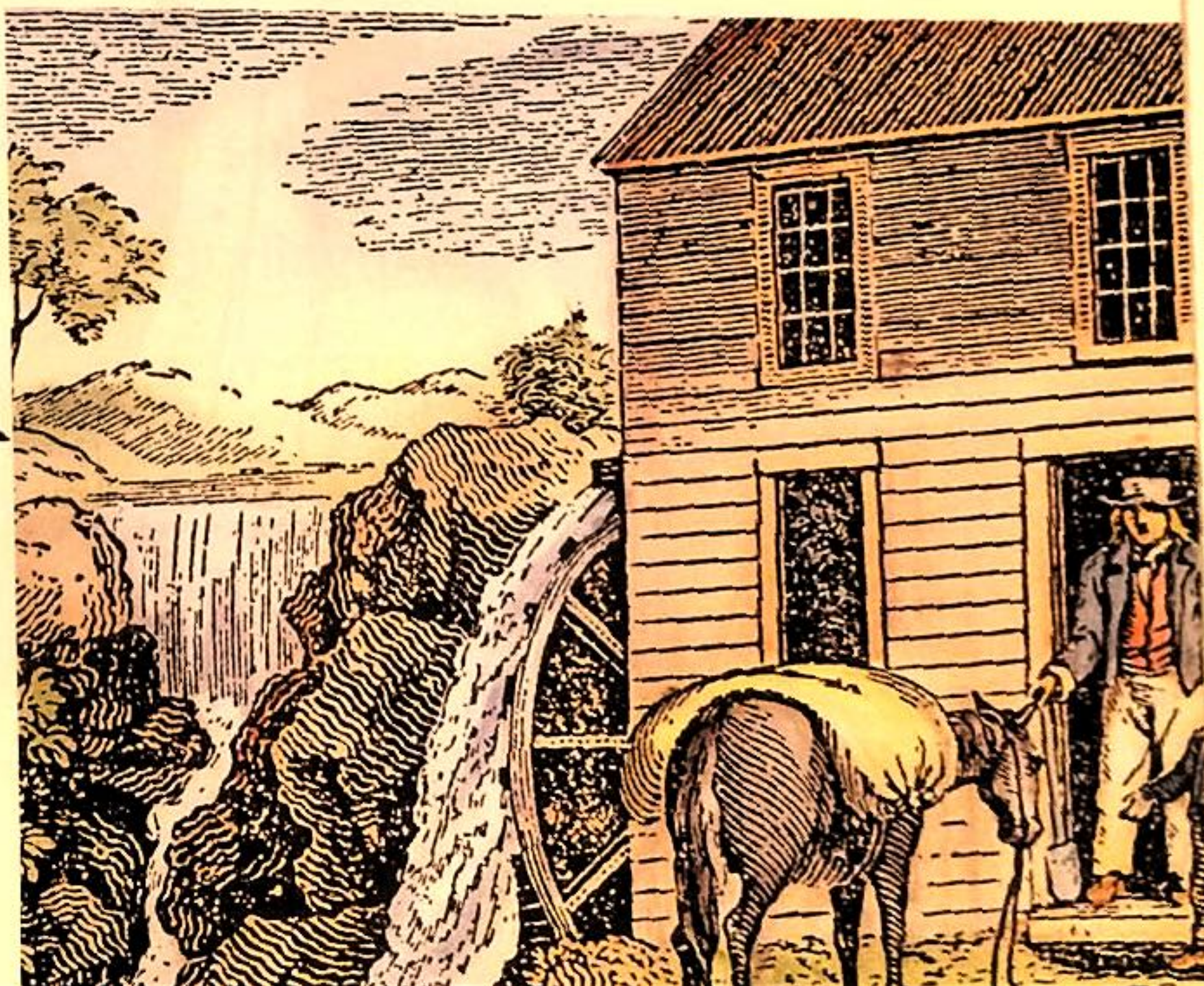
New Jersey was split almost exactly down the middle toward the end of the 17th century.



Farming had replaced fur trading as New Jersey's major occupation. Colonists made Native American foods such as maize and beans a part of their diet. Bread products were made from wheat and oats. Wheat also became a **cash crop**. It was sold to Europe and the Caribbean. A typical New Jersey village had at least one mill. Waterpower was used at mills to grind wheat and other grains into flour.

Mills were an important tool for grain farmers.

Most grains must be dried before they are sent to be milled.






Colonial women were responsible for many household chores.

Everyday Life

Colonial women often married young and raised large families. They cooked and took care of their young children. Women kept gardens and spun thread and yarn. They also mended clothes and preserved food. Some women crafted items such as soap and candles to sell for extra money. Sybilla Masters was born in Burlington, New Jersey. She invented a new device to clean corn. She was the first American woman to earn a **patent**.



A woman's property belonged to her husband once she married.



Quakers, also known as Friends, remain active today.

Lack of Rights

Colonial society taught a woman to obey her husband. English law prevented married women from owning property. Only widowed women could do so.

Women could not hold

patents. This meant Sybilla Masters had to patent her invention in her husband's name. But Quaker women had more opportunities than elsewhere in the colonies. Some women even became Quaker ministers. These tolerant attitudes made the Quakers unpopular with other religious groups.

The Quakers were one of the only religions to allow women any rights.

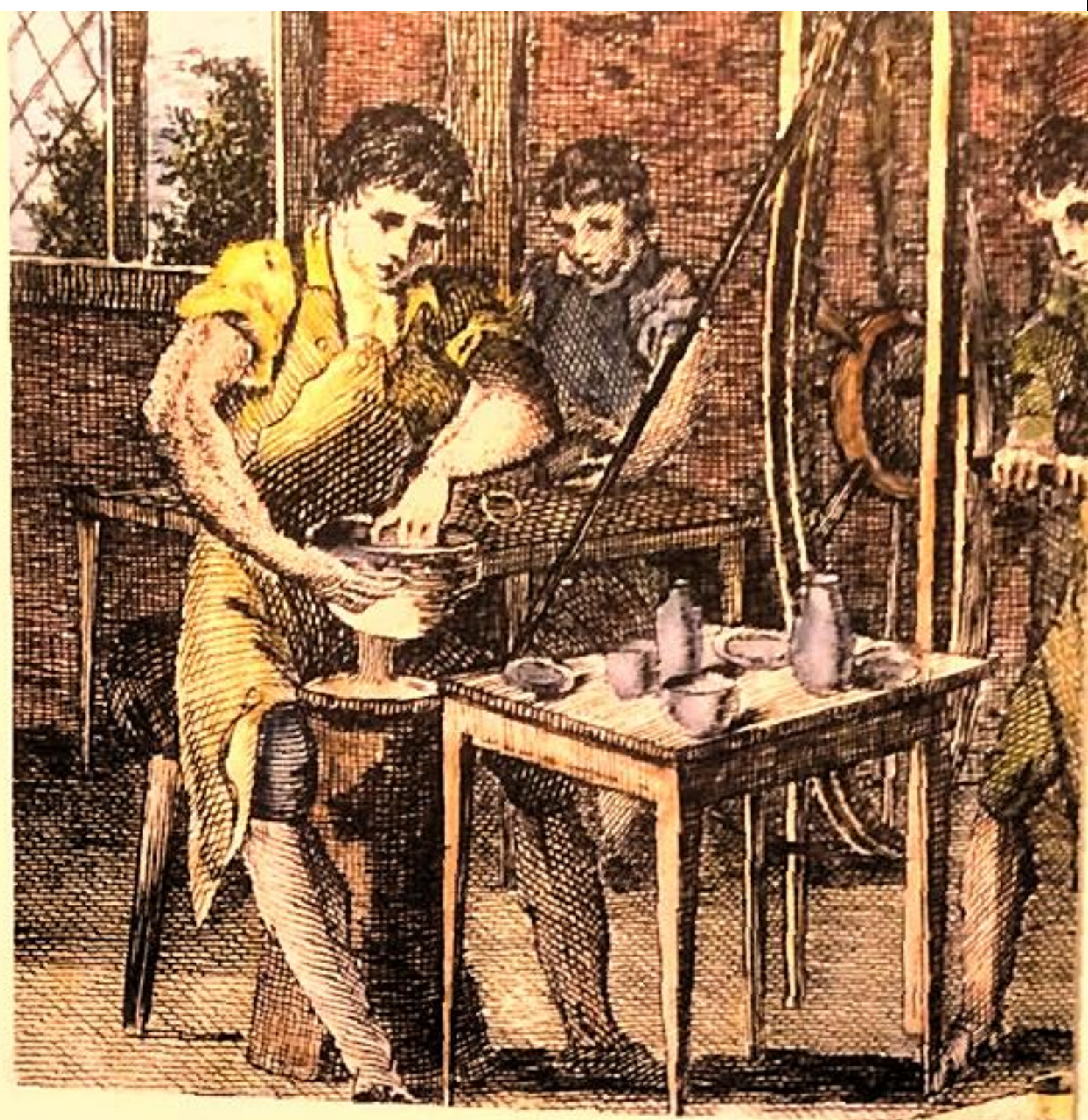


Children often helped with the chores on family farms.

Out in the Fields

Most men in New Jersey owned or worked on farms. The average colony farm was about 200 acres (81 hectares). But some families had only enough land to provide for their most basic needs. Colonial farmers lacked machines. Animals and the families' own muscles provided power. Oxen pulled plows. Men planted crops and built fences. They harvested wheat and other crops with hand tools. Farmers often worked from sunrise to sunset.

Potters used a special glaze on their dishes that prevented liquids from soaking into the pottery.



Other Jobs

New Jersey had about

It took several years for an apprentice to learn the skills of a trade.

60 towns by the mid-1700s. Trained tradesmen worked as barrel makers, carpenters, and millers in these towns. Many tradesmen taught their skills to **apprentices**. Apprentices worked for five to six years. They then left to get jobs of their own. New Jersey manufactured pottery for sale in the colonies. The forests provided wood for shipbuilding. Miners dug up iron used to make kettles and cannonballs.

Growing Up

Not all children in the colony went to school.

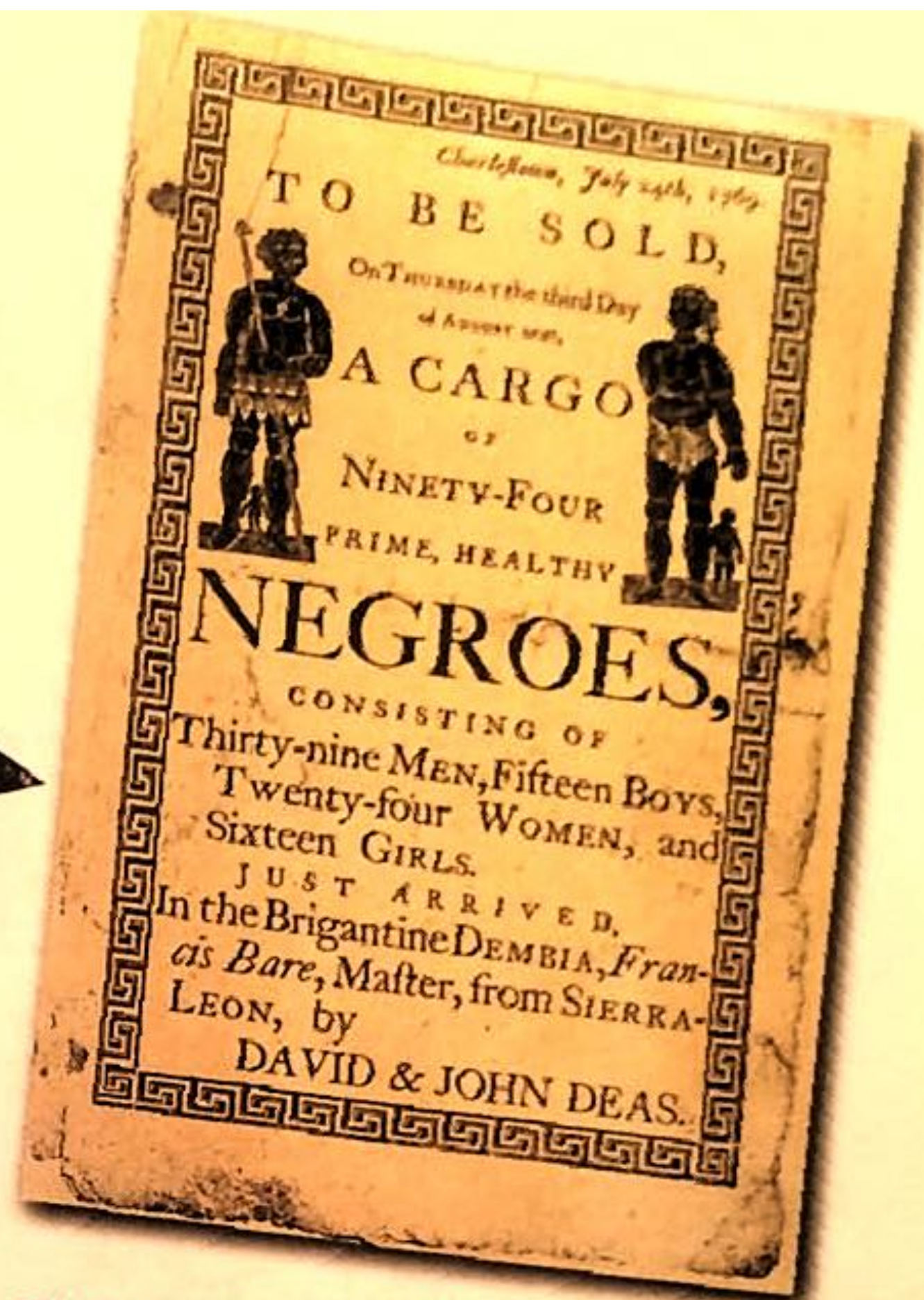
Those who did had to finish a long list of chores before heading off to spend a few hours at the schoolhouse. Children of all ages sat in a single classroom. Teachers punished misbehavior by spanking or smacking children's knuckles with a wooden rod. Children learned basic subjects such as reading, writing, and math. Only a small number of children received more education.

These children were usually boys.



Most colonial schoolhouses had just a single classroom.

In 2008, New Jersey became the first northern state to officially apologize for its role in allowing slavery in the United States.



There were more than 13,000 slaves living in New Jersey by the early 1800s.

Life as a Slave

Slavery was not as important to the economy of New Jersey as it was to the southern states. Enslaved people in New Jersey had some rights. It was not unusual for them to live in the same house as their masters. Yet enslaved people were still considered the property of their owners. Many of them escaped into New Jersey's thick forests and swamps.